Learning Conversation Notes	
Name of Partner: Superior Court High Conflict Calendar (STEP)	Date: 10-26-04
Number of Children Served: 58	Ages: 0-1 (14) 2-3 (25) 4-5 (32)
families with 84 children 0-5	13 unknown
When Served: July 04 through October	Gender: 41 (F) 43 (M)
04	Ethnicity: Not available

Conversation Participants: Suzanne Feris, Chris Trejo, Amy Rudd, Vickie Harmon

Desired Outcomes:

- Parents served through this program will communicate effectively with each other and their children, cooperatively co-parent, facilitate a more nurturing environment, and promote positive mental and emotional child development.
- Parents will demonstrate sustained ability to resolve parental conflict independent of the court, utilizing community resources as needed.

Performance Measures:

- Early Childhood Outcome Screen
- Client Exit Survey Summary
- Post graduation assessment of sustained ability to resolve conflict independent of the court (phone contact)

What is this data telling us about achievement of outcomes?

A review of Outcome Screen data showed:

Average improvement across all indicators is 54%

55% improved as far as not being physically, sexually or emotionally abused

48% improved in self controlled non violent behavior

64% improved in relationship with caregiver

47% improved as far as exposure to drugs, alcohol, etc

69% improved in achieving appropriate level of emotional development

64% showed improvement in positive parenting and child development practices.

70% showed improvement in experiencing a positive relationship with the child

About 30% of the children show resiliency even when they are in a high conflict family.

The assessment of the children is not the qualifying factor to get the children in the program. The program focuses on reducing parental conflict that directly affects the children.

Seven families involving 7 children 0-5 have exited the program since July 1, 2004.

The program mostly serves the 2-5 year old age range.

One third of the children still have abuse occurring, most likely emotional abuse caused by being exposed to negative parental contact. Generally, there is high conflict at the beginning and the basic needs of the child are taken care of, but the emotional needs are not taken care of. It takes a long time to do address emotional needs because the nature of family break-ups is that hard feelings are harbored for a long time and it takes time for the children to build up trust again.

No data for the sustainability outcome was available for this conversation.

In what ways will we apply what we have learned from our data?

Continue things that are working: Supervised visits/exchanges; co-parenting classes and coaching with a therapist; individual and family therapy and case coordination/management; and the social worker working directly with parents and children.

Things that could be improved: Better collection of demographics; collection of sustainability outcome data; more direct contact with the children to get a better sense of their development and emotional progress.

The program needs to partner more with other resources that are available for the 0-5.

Substance abuse among a small population (15%) is an issue affecting these children so the program needs to find additional funding for substance abuse services.

Staff needs to review their outcome data regularly – not just when they are meeting with first 5 staff.

Other points that were made during the conversation:

Courts in other counties are looking at the program. Program staff are trying to make the program sustainable.

Much of the work is done outside of the court – the court is reserved for the very high conflict families

Some families seem to be taking responsibility for solving their problems.

Children in the 0-5 age range usually score higher on the screening form than older children

Emotional abuse is the most common form of abuse among families in the court program.

Success for some parents is shown in their ability to communicate without pushing each other's buttons, sharing information about the child, and having peaceful child exchanges.

Regarding the "brain development message" the program staff educate the parents around how exposing the child to their specific negative and abusive behaviors inhibits their child's brain development. This information is also included in the child custody mediation and the co-parenting/conflict resolution classes.

Next Steps:

Work needs to be done by program staff on exactly how the sustainability outcome is measured through a postgraduate assessment. They will work with Mike Romero on this so that this data can be reviewed next time

More training is needed by program staff on how to use the Outcome Tracker software.

Demographic data needs to be available at all future conversations.

We will meet again in March 2005 to learn from outcome data.

Focus on collecting data for program learning and improvement - not only to present it to First 5.